


# Update on Northern Long-Eared Bat in Minnesota

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to

Minnesota Forest Resources Council  
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- DNR Communications
  - DNR Response
  - Information Needs
  - Research Plans
  - Strategic Options



# Background

- *Myotis septentrionalis*
- Winters in caves
- One of Minnesota's four cave bat species
- Up to 10,000 individuals in the state
- Spring, Summer, and Fall in forest habitat
- Roosts in trees
- Bears one young per year
- Forms small maternity colonies



# White-Nosed Syndrome



- Fungus found in Minnesota caves
- Disease not yet found in Minnesota
- 95-99% mortality in northeast US

# DNR Communications

- November 22, 2013 – organized briefing by FWS for 26 DNR staff from 5 divisions
- December 10, 2013 – submitted DNR Comment Letter
  - Supported listing, but not critical habitat designation
  - Expressed concern about lack of state role in developing management guidelines
  - Highlighted need to clarify summer habitat
  - Requested support for development of HCP
- February 26, 2014 – briefing to MFI/DNR quarterly mtg
- April 14, 2014 – briefing to MFRC Info Mgmt Comm
- Numerous Division Director and Commissioner Office briefings

# DNR Response

- With WI, MI, and IN, developed and signed joint April 17, 2014 letter to FWS
  - Expressed concern about overly restrictive and unrealistic ICPG guidance
  - Requested state input into future guidance
  - Requested delay in decision
- May 16, 2014 – conference call with FWS Regional Director and representatives of 8 state
- May 22, 2014 – 5 state Commissioner meeting w/FWS regional leadership



# Urgent Information Needs

- Inadequate information on stand types used for summer habitat
- Inadequate information on tree species used for summer maternity roosts
- Inadequate information on size of trees used for summer maternity roosts
- Inadequate information on dates of tree use
- Inadequate information on distance of migration from hibernacula

# Research Plans

## 2014 Pilot Research Project Cooperative Funding

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Dept. of Defense, Camp Ripley
- DNR, Division of Ecological and Water Resources
- DNR, Division of Parks and Recreation
- DNR, Division of Forestry
- DNR, Division of Fish and Wildlife



# Research Plans

## 2014 Pilot Research Project Objectives

- Test and refine methods for documenting summer habitat use
- Work in two of Minnesota's forest types (study sites will be in Camp Ripley and Superior National Forest)
- Build technical expertise and staff capacity for future bat research and survey work
- Build knowledge for developing mitigation strategies

# Research Plans

## 2014 Pilot Research Project Methods

- Analyze existing data to identify project sites
- Capture female northern long-eared bats
- Mount radios on up to 10 captured bats and follow to roost sites
- Quantify activity at roost sites
- Characterize roost trees and stands



# Research Plans

## 2015-2018 LCCMR Research Proposal

- Summarize all available existing bat survey data in MN
- Complete bat surveys throughout MN's forests
- Trap and radio-tag up to 40 female northern long-eared bats
- Quantify activity at roost sites
- Characterize roost trees and stands



# Strategic Options for Moderating Effect of Listing

- If listed as Endangered, apply for Incidental Take Permit (requires development of Habitat Conservation Plan)
  - Short-term: Develop Low Effect or Interim HCP
  - Long-term: Develop full HCP with EIS
  - MN/WI/MI have applied for HCP planning grant
- If listed as Threatened, encourage FWS to include 4(d) rule in publication of decision
  - Short-term: implement conservation agreement with technical assistance letter
  - Long-term: implement conservation plan



# Strategic Options for Moderating Effect of Listing

- States are pursuing alternatives on their own
- States are proposing to form technical team to develop coordinated conservation measures
- Any approach will require partnerships with other forest resource stakeholders
- Some states are pursuing strategies for state lands before addressing strategies for private lands